

School code: _____

Interviewer: _____

NEW TEACHER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

1. **What grade (subject, for middle and high school) do you teach? How long have you taught? At this school? What brought you to this school?**

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2. **Are you aware of any school improvement efforts that occurred before you came to this school?**

[Probes for turnaround schools: Were you aware of the turnaround in student achievement? Who or what do you think was responsible for the turnaround?]

[Probe for comparison schools: Which of the school improvement efforts had the most significant effects on student achievement?]

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3. **What are the two or three most important strategies for improving student achievement? How were they introduced? In what venues? By whom? What is their focus?**

[Probes: Curriculum? Instructional practices? Student assignments?]

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4. **What is the “vision” for the school? How is the vision communicated? Has the vision been modified since you came to the school?**

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5. **How are teachers evaluated? Are teachers held accountable for results? What happens if a teacher does not produce the desired results? What data are used to determine whether the teacher has produced the desired results?**

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6. **What support do teachers receive to help them perform?**

[Probes: Help from people outside the school? School leadership?]

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7. **Please tell me more about the professional development at your school. What topics are covered? Who chooses the topics?**

[Probes: is professional development school-, grade- or subject focused? Do individual teachers select from a menu of topics?] How is it delivered? [Probe for workshops, coaching, etc.] Where is it delivered? When is it delivered?

8. **How are students evaluated? How are students motivated to participate in the learning process? What rewards are available for student accomplishments (beyond report cards—e.g., “student of the month,” other public recognition)? On what basis are students rewarded?**
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9. **Describe the assessments used to measure student progress. When were they instituted? How often are they administered? Has this changed? Was training provided in analyzing and using data? If so, who provided the training? What happens with the information from the assessments?**

[Probes: Schoolwide, grade-level, or subject area? Were data used for instructional change? To provide individualized support to students? Are they currently used in the same way?]

10. **Is there a pacing schedule? Does it help you with your instruction? Is it monitored? If so, by whom? What happens if you are not on schedule?**
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11. **Is there common planning time?**

[Probes: Grade-level planning? Subject area planning? Cross-disciplinary planning? What data were introduced? Did the results lead to changes in classroom practice? Does the school schedule support collaboration?]

12. **When you came to this school, what orientation and support were you given?**
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13. **How do you think most staff members perceive the principal? What actions does he/she take to help teachers succeed?**

[Probe for principal awareness of classroom practice]

14. **Are there factors that help or hinder the ongoing improvement of the school? What are the main distracters you feel keep the school from achieving its goals?**

[Probe for specific distracters such as instruction interruptions, lack of parent involvement, etc. What do you do to deal with them? What does school leadership do to deal with them?]

15. **Is there anything else I should know to tell the story of your school improvement efforts?**
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